

Chapter XVIII: YEAR-END UPDATE

Ongoing deliberation concerning equitable representation of disciplines within the Faculty Senate and Undergraduate Council due to realignment brought on by University administrative restructuring left questions as to how to proceed in filling expired faculty positions in the Assessment Committee's Design and Implementation Group (DIG). With discipline representation concerns still unresolved at the start of the academic year and with questions centered around the structure of the current assessment program, it was decided by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, with initial recommendation by the Chair, to suspend the functioning of the Assessment Committee until discipline alignments could be established. This would allow an opportunity to appoint a task force to look at the state of assessment at Truman and recommend a course of direction the program should pursue. This task force that was appointed by the Provost is currently meeting to evaluate a course of action.

The College Portrait for Truman as part of the Voluntary System of Accountability went on-line with initial data entry under the direction of Dr. Martin Eisenberg, Associate Provost.

Critical Thinking and where and how it is taught in the curriculum is still an issue facing the University. Dr. Doug Davenport and Dr. Glenn Wehner presented data at the Summer (2008) Strategic Planning and Assessment Workshop that included three direct measures (CLA, MAPP and AP) and two indirect measures (GSQ and NSSE) of proficiency in critical thinking skills of the students. All five measures indicated that continued work and emphasis is required in this arena of the curriculum with some 33% of the students still not demonstrating competence.

Dr. Scott Alberts from Math & Computer Science was named the new Portfolio Director. He and former director, Dr. Karen Smith, collaborated efforts in the spring of 2008 with Dr. Alberts to assume the reins in fall of the 2008-9 academic year. Also new to the portfolio process is on-line submission by the students.

The Student Interview Project, spearheaded by Dr. Jeffrey Vittengl (Psychology), investigated the topic of faculty and staff behaviors in and out of the classroom that positively or negatively affected student engagement during their time at Truman. An executive summary with analysis along with raw data can be found in Volumes II and III of this year's *Almanac*.

The first year of data collection and comparison of results from junior testing of the core competencies of Scientific Reasoning and Qualitative Reasoning as measured by either the James Madison instrument or by two test sections of the CAAP was completed. Tests for reliability for the JMU test (.828 Cronbach's Alpha) and for the CAAP scientific reasoning (.84 Kuder-Richardson Formula 20) and mathematical reasoning (.86 Kuder-Richardson Formula 20) sections were comparable. It was determined that reliability is lower for some JMU subscores related to specific outcomes, specifically Physical Science outcome 4 and Life Science outcome 4 were quite low. This was most attributed to a smaller number of questions that mapped to these Truman outcomes that were not necessarily outcomes of the JMU curriculum. A second round of data is to be collected over the 2008-9 academic year, in addition

to a sampling of first-time students to provide a baseline and to evaluate the efficacy of a value-added model for the JMU instrument.

Work is continuing with ITS to establish an information warehouse to concentrate assessment test results with student class selection and performance to enhance research capabilities involving assessment concerns.

The NSSE was again administered to a sampling of first-year and senior students with the recommendation by the Assessment Committee to try to track the first-year students so that they are included in their senior year for NSSE administration.